



# DIOCESAN PRESS SERVICE

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## EPISCOPAL DEACON ARRESTED IN NICARAGUA

MANAGUA, Nicaragua -- The Rev. Willie Allen, a deacon of the Episcopal Church, was placed under arrest here about the first of October together with some 45 other persons, it was announced by Tomás Borge, Minister of the Interior of the Sandinista government.

Mr. Allen is allegedly charged with participating in a demonstration against the presence and influence of Cuban nationals in the city of Bluefields on the Nicaraguan Atlantic coast. However, witnesses of the demonstration have claimed that Mr. Allen was actually involved in the interest of saving lives and government property when he persuaded a mob not to take over a radio station.

In spite of continued efforts by Episcopal Church officials, the government has not permitted Mr. Allen to be visited by Church leaders, family or friends. However, his family has been allowed to provide him with food and clothing.

The 54-year-old deacon is one of six local leaders who were ordained in 1976 after a long practical training in an effort to provide pastoral care in isolated areas around Bluefields, a strong center of missionary work of the Episcopal Church.

The government has recently accused Bluefields of "separatist tendencies." Named after the Dutch pirate Blewfedt, who used it as a base in the 17th century, it was the capital of the British Miskito Coast protectorate until returned to Nicaragua in 1850.

During the two occupations of Nicaragua by the United States (1912-25 and 1927-32), the Marines were stationed here to quell revolutionary activities.

Bluefields has a population of 20,000 people, mostly of West Indian descent.

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